

CHARTER
FOR
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S./MEXICO BORDER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
FIELD COORDINATING COMMITTEE

This Charter (hereinafter the "Charter") is made and entered into this 11th day of August, 1994, by and among the bureaus and offices of the Department of the Interior which are signatories to this Charter, for the purpose of promoting, facilitating, and enhancing communication and coordination between and among said bureaus and offices with respect to U.S./Mexico border environmental issues of Departmental interest and concern.

The border region contains nationally significant resource protection areas such as national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, national conservation areas, wilderness areas, biosphere reserves, reservoirs, Outer Continental Shelf, and national interest lands. A myriad of Federal trust species (federally endangered or threatened, migratory birds, some marine mammals) occur in the border area, and their well-being is the responsibility of the Department of the Interior. It also contains extensive Native American reserved lands of great natural and cultural heritage value on both sides of the border. Activities that occur near and adjacent to Federal lands may also have an impact on the natural resources we are charged with managing.

Federal agencies are charged with administering and enforcing national environmental laws throughout the area. Other Federal development programs and projects throughout the area greatly affect the roles and responsibilities of the Department of the Interior along the border.

Thus, it is recognized by the bureaus which are signatories to this Charter that other Federal agencies, Indian Nations, State and local governments, and private organizations may also have a large stake in issues of Departmental concern. As such, they are to be consulted and included, as appropriate, in discussions and resolutions of such issues.

Article I. *Establishment of the Department of the Interior U.S./Mexico Border Environmental Issues Field Coordinating Committee*

A. There is established a Department of the Interior U.S./Mexico Border Environmental Issues Field Coordinating Committee (hereafter the "Committee") comprised of the following bureaus of the Department:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Mines
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Geological Survey
- Minerals Management Service
- National Biological Survey
- National Park Service

The Regional Environmental Offices of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and San Francisco, California, shall be ex-officio members of this Committee.

Each bureau shall designate their field representative (and alternate) with the approval/support of their Regional/State Directors. The Committee shall meet at least twice yearly. Additional meetings shall be held as determined by the Chair.

B. The purpose of the Committee shall be to encourage appropriate and joint involvement among various bureaus to address border issues. Specifically, the Committee will identify and provide opportunities to communicate and coordinate at Regional, State, and field levels between and among Department of the Interior bureaus and offices and, further, to facilitate and enhance communication between the field and headquarters offices on border issues.

Through enhanced communication and coordination, the Committee will encourage and facilitate the development of consistent Department of the

Interior policies, strategies, plans, programs and priorities, and encourage the development of such by other U.S. Government agencies, for addressing the environmental, conservation, and cultural concerns of the border region.

The overall effort also will require close and constant coordination between the Committee and State, local and tribal governments concerning programs, projects and activities affecting the border area. Additionally, the Committee will develop a mechanism for monitoring the programs, projects, and activities of its member bureaus and offices to further the objectives of ecosystem management, restoration, and maintenance.

To do this, the Committee will:

- ◆ encourage appropriate joint technical and programmatic involvement among various bureaus to address border issues;
- ◆ promote coordination with Mexican counterparts through established agreements and mechanisms;
- ◆ avoid duplication of efforts through reorganized strengths of the various bureaus, improved field coordination and communication of ongoing and planned programs, and promotion of jointly undertaken projects;
- ◆ encourage expedited implementation of programs, projects, and activities included in bureau long and short term plans for environmental protection, restoration, and maintenance of the border area;
- ◆ encourage improved, consistent and coordinated data collection, management, and dissemination;
- ◆ coordinate and communicate with NAFTA related/created institutions (BECC, etc.); and
- ◆ provide for coordinated and comprehensive bureau review, as described in 516 Departmental Manual Chapter 7, of environmental documents prepared by other Federal agencies and circulated under Departmental control number, to support their NAFTA and other U.S./Mexico border related activities.

The Committee will not attempt to replace or duplicate existing and established bureau structures or responsibilities.

Chairperson(s) will be selected by Committee members. Selection shall be by consensus.

It will be the responsibility of the Chairperson(s) to:

- Communicate with appropriate DOI officials in Washington, D.C.;
- Schedule, arrange for, and chair the Committee meetings;
- Prepare and distribute an agenda at least 2 weeks prior to each scheduled meeting; and,
- Ensure that minutes are kept of each meeting and distribute such minutes within 2 weeks following each meeting.

Topics may be added to or deleted from the agenda, and issues will be approved or disapproved during each meeting by consensus of those members in attendance.

The Chairperson(s) shall serve a term of 1 year but may be extended for one subsequent term by consensus of the Committee members.

Location and hosting of meetings will rotate among member bureaus of the Committee.

It will be the responsibility of the bureau representatives to establish a process for greater communication.

Article II. Establishment of Intra-Departmental "Issue Teams"

- A. The purpose of "Issue Teams" shall be to address, study and analyze specific program or problem areas or topics deemed by the Committee to be of critical concern or interest to the Department of the Interior or any of its bureaus. The issue team will make recommendations to the Committee.

From time to time, issues of specific interest to the Department, as differentiated from individual bureaus of the Department, may be assigned through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget to the Committee for study and analysis.

The issue teams shall have a definite life span. Once the issue to be addressed has been analyzed and recommendations submitted to the Committee, the issue team shall be disbanded.

Issue teams shall be composed of field experts from the Departmental bureaus represented on the Committee which have a specific jurisdiction, special

expertise or bona fide interest in the issue. The experts shall obtain approval from their respective supervisors as appropriate. The Committee may invite representation from other Federal agencies, Indian Nations, State and/or local governments, and NGOs it finds to be affected by or which may have an impact on the issue.

The Committee shall designate a chairperson and alternate for each special issue team it establishes. It shall be the responsibility of that issue team chairperson to establish schedules, agendas, and activities to meet the goals and objectives established by the Committee for resolution of the issue.

The Committee will define in specific terms each issue to be addressed, identify goals and objectives for each issue team, establish parameters for each issue analysis/study, identify the audience for whom the conclusions/recommendations will be intended, and establish a general timeframe for interim and final report submissions.

B. Examples of issues or issues related to a geographic area that could be addressed by an issue team are:

- El Paso/Juarez Area
- Training (coordination of DOI bureau initiatives with Mexican counterparts)
- U.S./Mexico Border Mapping Needs
- Lower Rio Grande Valley (Amistad International Dam to the Gulf of Mexico)
- Gulf/Laguna Madre
- Sonoran Desert Alliance
- Chihuahua
- San Pedro River (water rights issues)

Article III: Additional Terms

- A. Cooperation with other Government entities:** The Committee will work with other government and private entities, as necessary or desirable, in ways that will help facilitate the purpose of the Committee.
- B. Financial and Administrative Support:** The Committee will be self-supporting.
- C. Activities of the Committee:** All activities conducted under this Charter shall be subject to applicable Federal laws, agency regulations, and availability of staff and funding.
- D. Property Utilization:** Any property acquired or utilized under this Charter shall remain the property of the acquiring bureau unless otherwise specified by written agreement among the parties.
- E. Termination:** This Charter shall remain in effect indefinitely. Its effective date shall be the date of the last approving signature. Any bureau may terminate its participation in this Charter at any time by providing ninety (90) days written notice to the other bureaus. Termination of participation in this Charter by individual bureaus shall not constitute termination of the Charter among the remaining bureaus.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, this Charter will be executed in counterparts with the effective date being that of last Bureau/Office signature. A copy of all original executed signature pages shall constitute the original Charter.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Authorized Official: Ada E. Deer
Title: Assistant Secretary
Date: 8-11-94

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Authorized Official: Alan P. Mize
Title: Deputy Director
Date: 8/14/94

BUREAU OF MINES

Authorized Official: H. Coover
Title: Chief Director
Date: 8/11/94

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Authorized Official: J. Lawrence Burke
Title: Acting Commissioner
Date: Aug 11, 1994

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Authorized Official: Russell J. Earnest
Title: Acting Director
Date: 11 August 1994